



## **HHS FAQ on CARES ACT Provider Relief Fund**



The Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) has posted new Frequently Asked Questions regarding the second tranche of disbursement of the CARES Act Provider Relief Fund. Please note there is conflicting information about whether a provider who hasn't previously received money from the first round of funding can apply for this round. As soon as we have more details, we will update you.

[\*\*Download the FAQ Sheet Here\*\*](#)

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## **CMS Reevaluates Accelerated Payment Program and Suspends Advance Payment Program**



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On April 26, the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) announced that it is reevaluating the amounts that will be paid under its Accelerated Payment Program and suspending its Advance Payment Program to Part B suppliers effective immediately. The agency made this announcement following the successful payment of over \$100 billion to health care providers and suppliers through these programs and in light of the \$175 billion recently appropriated for health care provider relief payments.

CMS had expanded these temporary loan programs to ensure providers and suppliers had the resources needed to combat the beginning stages of the 2019 Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19). Funding will continue to be available to hospitals and other health care providers on the front lines of the coronavirus response primarily from the **Provider Relief Fund**.

The Accelerated and Advance Payment (AAP) Programs are typically used to give providers emergency funding and address cash flow issues for providers and suppliers when there is disruption in claims submission or claims processing, including during a public health emergency or Presidentially-declared disaster.

Since expanding the AAP programs on March 28, 2020, CMS approved over 21,000 applications totaling \$59.6 billion in payments to Part A providers, which includes hospitals. For Part B suppliers, including doctors, non-physician practitioners and durable medical equipment suppliers, CMS approved almost 24,000 applications advancing \$40.4 billion in payments. The AAP programs are not a grant, and providers and suppliers are typically required to pay back the funding within one year, or less, depending on provider or supplier type. Beginning today, CMS will not be accepting any new applications for the Advance Payment Program, and CMS will be reevaluating all pending and new applications for Accelerated Payments in light of historical direct payments made available through the Department of Health & Human Services' (HHS) Provider Relief Fund.

Significant additional funding will continue to be available to hospitals and other health care providers through other programs. Congress appropriated \$100 billion in the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act (PL 116-136) and \$75 billion through the Paycheck Protection Program and Health Care Enhancement Act (PL 116-139) for health care providers. HHS is distributing this money through the Provider Relief Fund, and these payments do not need to be repaid.

The CARES Act Provider Relief Fund is being administered through HHS and has already released \$30 billion to providers and is in the process of releasing an additional \$20 billion, with more funding anticipated to be released soon. This funding will be used to support health care-related expenses or lost revenue attributable to the COVID-19 pandemic and to ensure uninsured Americans can get treatment for COVID-19.

For more information on the CARES Act Provider Relief Fund and how to apply, **[click here](#)**.

## COVID-19 QUESTIONS? GET ANSWERS & EARN CME.

As providers, physicians and members of the health care team want to do whatever they can to ensure the health and well-being of their patients. During the COVID-19 pandemic, the practice of medicine is facing challenges in delivering the best care amid government mandates and ever-changing public perceptions of the situation. At the Medical Association of the State of Alabama, we want to help by offering online COVID-19 CME courses (free for members).

Courses include:

- **PRIMARY CARE PHYSICIANS IN THE COVID-19 ERA**
- **PPE FOR PHYSICIANS: NEW, USED AND REFRESHED**
- **AN INFECTIOUS DISEASE DOCTOR'S SYMPTOMS OF COVID AND THOUGHTS ABOUT THE PANDEMIC**

#### Credits

The Medical Foundation of Alabama designates this enduring material for a maximum of .25 AMA PRA Category 1 Credits™. Physicians should claim only the credit commensurate with the extent of their participation in the activity.

This activity has been planned and implemented in accordance with the accreditation requirements and policies of the Medical Association of the State of Alabama through the joint providership of the Medical Foundation of Alabama and the Medical Association of the State of Alabama. The Medical Foundation of Alabama is accredited by the Medical Association of the State of Alabama to provide continuing medical education for physicians.

**[HTTPS://WWW.ALAMEDICAL.ORG/COVID19](https://www.alamedical.org/covid19)**

## Second Round of Funding Coming: Do You Have Questions About the Paycheck Protection Program?



As you have seen by our updates, we are always on the lookout for helpful resources, from all levels of government, that may help you and your practice weather the storm created by COVID-19. This week the Small Business Administration (SBA) and U.S. Treasury Department released a document that provides answers to frequently asked questions about the Paycheck Protection Program (PPP), which was established to provide forgivable loans to businesses for keeping employees on the payroll.

**[You can learn more about the Paycheck Protection Program by clicking here.](#)**

Last week, the House of Representatives passed the "Paycheck Protection Program and Health Care Enhancement Act," the supplemental COVID-19 bill that passed the Senate earlier this week.

It is likely that some elements of the programs receiving added funds in this legislation will be revised to assure they are better targeted toward facilities and physician practices most in need, so we cannot yet provide details on how the new money will be distributed.

A CARES 2.0/COVID 4.0 bill remains under development for consideration in early May, and will cover a wider range of issues.

**Read a Summary of the Paycheck Protection Program and Health Care Enhancement Act Here**

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## **General Allocation Fund**



Late this past week the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) announced that it will begin distributing the second tranche of funds from the \$100 billion in funds to hospitals and other healthcare providers impacted by the coronavirus response. The funding will be used to support healthcare-related expenses or lost revenue attributable to COVID-19. HHS announced that \$50 billion of the Provider Relief Fund is allocated for general distribution to facilities and providers which billed Medicare in 2019, and are impacted by COVID-19, based on providers' 2018 net patient revenue. Of this \$50 billion, the initial \$30 billion was distributed between April 10 and April 17, and payments to providers from that \$30 billion were calculated based on providers' portion of Medicare fee-for-service revenue.

Starting on April 24, a portion of providers will automatically be sent an advance payment based off the revenue data they submit in CMS cost reports. Providers without adequate cost report data on file will need to submit their revenue information to the [\*\*General Distribution Portal\*\*](#) for additional general distribution funds. Initially some states and specialties thought that physicians must also submit cost reports, but the AMA verified with HHS that this is not the case. Physicians, however, do need to submit their revenue information so that it can be verified via the General Distribution Portal. The portal is now open. The customer service line confirmed anyone who has a Billing TIN (including a pediatric or obstetric practice) who lost revenue in March and/or can estimate lost revenue in April due to the COVID-19 crisis, should be filling out this portal application.

The AMA has put together the attached guidance to help physicians pull together the information they need to submit to the portal. Also, attached is the additional information from HHS regarding the distribution. Below are key links from HHS with further explanations. If the AMA learns of additional information, we will disseminate it to the Federation.

[\*\*https://covid19.linkhealth.com/docu/sign/#/step/1\*\*](https://covid19.linkhealth.com/docu/sign/#/step/1)  
[\*\*https://chameleoncloud.io/review/2977-5ea0af98f0fd0/prod\*\*](https://chameleoncloud.io/review/2977-5ea0af98f0fd0/prod)

**Additional Funding Related to Treatment of the Uninsured**

· A portion of the \$100 billion Provider Relief Fund will be used to reimburse healthcare providers, at Medicare rates, for COVID-related treatment of the uninsured. Physicians are eligible for this funding. Every health care provider who has provided treatment for uninsured COVID-19 patients on or after February 4, 2020, can request claims reimbursement through the program and will be reimbursed at Medicare rates, subject to available funding. Steps will involve: enrolling as a provider participant, checking patient eligibility and benefits, submitting patient information, submitting claims, and receiving payment via direct deposit.

· Providers can register for the program on April 27, 2020, and begin submitting claims in early May 2020.

[See More Information Here](#)



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